My hackNY Application

November 18, 2013

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Over the past few weeks, I've traveled to a number of schools to talk to student hackers about why they should apply for the hackNY summer fellowship program. The basic gist is that every summer hackNY supplies a group of up and coming student hackers with housing in the heart of NYC and pairs them up with a kickass paid intership at one of the city's best startups. There's also a pretty spactacular speaker series where the hackNY fellows get to meet various awesome people in tech and hear their stories in a very intimate setting. If you're a student hacker and you're looking for a way to spend your summer, hackNY is the premier option out there and you should definitely apply now.

I thought it might be useful to share my application from the year I was accepted. I think I went slightly over the top, but you can clearly get a feel for the things I care about from my answers. Hopefully someone finds this useful.

Note: For reference as you're reading, Hacker League is my startup and Abe and Ian are my co-founders.

Tell us about a time you built something awesome in code. How did you choose it? Why did you enjoy it?

My favorite coding story is the Hacker League story that most people will probably never hear. People always find out about the week before the last HackNY hackathon we stayed up building the basic structure, how

we made most of the features at the actual event, and how awesome everything went. But nobody seems to know about the second iteration; the one we lost nearly a month of sleep over and figuring out by trial and error.

None of us really knew what we were getting into. I'd never built a production Rails application before and Abe and Ian didn't even know any Ruby at the time. But we persevered. We learned and used each others strengths to build something that was both maintainable and scalable. We chose to rebuild the site from scratch because it was something that we wanted to last for a long time and something we were all passionate about. It was a great learning experience and we really learned to work well together as a team.

Is there a particular technology or industry you're currently interested in? How come?

After spending the last few months cornering every technology evangelist I could manage to get my hands on and asking them a million questions about the job, I think I've found the next career move I want to make. I have all the makings of a great evangelist. I'm an avid public speaker. I love to teach. I love to learn. I love to build. I find excuses to travel both near and far to tech events. I'm always actively meeting new people and making connections. I'm passionate about community and culture. I'm committed. I'm a thinker and a dreamer, but I'm also realistic and pragmatic. I'm both a hacker and a programmer (and no, they aren't the same thing at all).

I know that the success of a technology is a two way street; it's about both getting the community excited about the company and the company excited about the community. I love to share the things I've made as well as the things that other people have showed me. I attend every hackathon I can reasonably get to. I love getting people excited

about the things that excite me. And most of all, I live and breath for the startup lifestyle.

So given all that, I know I would be doing myself an injustice by not at least giving technology evangelism a shot.

When you're not coding, what do you like to do for fun?

I started the Rutgers Hackathon Club to help get people excited about hackathons, but its ended up being the ultimate outlet for my urge to teach and share. Any time I get between classes or after work, I find myself drawing on whiteboards in front of a small audience of Rutgers Hackers, helping them with their resumes, recommending books, blogs, magazines, and newsletters, brainstorming crazy hacks, planning out their own hackathon, working through homework for classes I haven't and won't ever take. Its a very rewarding hobby and I've been working on expanding it even further. I recently signed up to give a presentation to a group of NYU students and I'm hoping I can find even more ways to give back to the community.

Tell us about what you hope to learn this summer and why is hackNY right for you.

I'm not quite sure to be honest. I've been around HackNY for the past couple years thanks to Ian and Abe, and I know how passionate they are about the program and what it stands for to them. I'm sure they could both tell me a million things they learned during their time as fellows, and I'm sure I'd have the same million things to tell someone else if I did it too. The one thing I can say for sure though is that every one of the handful of HackNY fellows and mentors I've met during the last two years has been someone I admired and some of them have even managed to inspire me at points. Really the only thing I could ask for is to meet a few more people like them and HackNY is the obvious choice for that.

- Swift

P.S. My name is Swift. I'm a former developer evangelist at [SendGrid](#) and one of the founders of [Hacker League](#). I also tweet as [@SwiftAlphaOne](#). Follow me there for more of my thoughts and maybe a laugh or two.

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